

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-04 ISO-00 COME-00 AGR-05 AID-05 SWF-01

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3914

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, EAID, EINV, TBIO, BGEN, LI

SUBJECT: UNIROYAL PLANS TO HALT CATTLE PROJECT

1. THE LIBERIAN AGRICULTURAL CORPORATION (LAC), A WHOLLY-OWNED SUBSIDIARY OF UNIROYAL, HAS BEEN OPERATING A CATTLE RAISING PROJECT ON ITS RUBBER PLANTATION IN GRAND BASSA COUNTY SINCE 1967. FROM 1967 TO 1970 THIS PROJECT WAS PART OF A USAID CONTRACT (AID/AFR-488). SINCE THAT TIME PROJECT HAS BEEN CONTINUED BY LAC AT OWN EXPENSE.
2. LAC PROJECT HAS BEEN THE MAJOR EFFORT TO DATE BY ANY ORGANIZATION TO DEVELOP LIBERIAN CATTLE INDUSTRY. IN COUNTRY WHERE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE SUFFER FROM PROTEIN DEFICIENCY, IT HOLDS GREAT PROMISE. DESPITE DIFFICULTIES OF CLIMATE, DISEASE, AND LACK OF TRAINED WORKERS, PROJECT HAS UNTIL RECENTLY MET WITH SOME SUCCESS. THE BASIC BREEDING HERD OF IMPROVED NATIVE N'DAMA CATTLE HAD BEEN SELECTED AND A FEEDING HERD HAD ALSO BEEN BROUGHT IN. BY JUNE OF THIS YEAR THE TOTAL HERD SIZE WAS BETWEEN 800 AND 1,000 HEAD, FAR AND AWAY THE LARGEST AND MOST PROMISING IN THE COUNTRY'S HISTORY. COMMERCIAL SALES HAD ALREADY BEGUN, AND PROJECT WAS EXCITING INTEREST ON PART LARGE FARMERS AND NEIGHBORING SMALL FARMERS.
3. SINCE JUNE TWO DISEASES, FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE (FMD) AND CONTAGIOUS BOVINE PLEUROPNEUMONIA (CBPP) HAVE DECIMATED THE

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LAC HERD. THE FMD, WHICH ATTACKED HERD FIRST, WAS CONTROLLED

BY SLAUGHTER AND VACCINATION. THEN CBPP HIT REDUCED HERD.

4. AT PRESENT TIME THE LAC HERD HAS BEEN REDUCED TO ABOUT 200 COWS, ALL NEAR CALVING. THESE HAVE ALL RECEIVED MEDICATION CALLED QTE TUYLAN UNQTE WHICH DESCRIBED AS BROAD SPECTRUM SULFA DRUG. CATTLE HAVE APPARENTLY RESPONDED WELL TO THIS DRUG, AND NO NEW CASES OF CBPP HAVE BEEN REPORTED FOR PAST THREE WEEKS. THOUGH LITTLE IS KNOWN OF CBPP, IT POSSIBLE THAT CALVES MAY HAVE DEVELOPED PREA-NATAL IMMUNITY. THEREFORE, FACT OF RESPONSE TO MEDICATION AND POSSIBILITY OF IMMUNITY HAVE GREAT SCIENTIFIC INTEREST AS WELL AS PRACTICAL APPLICATION FOR ANY FUTURE CATTLE DEVELOPMENT IN LIBERIA.

5. I HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT UNIROYAL MANAGEMENT (MR. N.H. GOULDIN, MANAGING DIRECTOR, UNIROYAL PLANTATION, OXFORD MANAGEMENT AND RESEARCH CENTER, MIDDLEBURY, CONNECTICUT 06749) IS NOW CONSIDERING TERMINATING THIS VALUABLE CATTLE RAISING PROJECT DUE TO BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS. THIS WOULD BE GREAT LOSS FOR LIBERIA. PRESENT GOL POLICY CALLS FOR GREATLY INCREASED EFFORT AIMED AT ACHIEVING SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN FOODSTUFFS IN SHORTEST POSSIBLE TIME. IT PROBABLE THAT GOL WILL ATTEMPT ACHIEVE THIS THROUGH ESTABLISHMENT OF LARGE, MECHANIZED AND DIVERSIFIED PLANTATIONS (MONROVIA 6787), PORTION OF WHICH WILL BE DEVOTED TO CATTLE RAISING. EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE DEVELOPED BY LAC OVER PAST SEVEN YEARS IN AREAS OF DISEASE CONTROL, BREEDING, PASTURE IMPROVEMENT AND OTHER PROBLEMS WOULD BE INVALUABLE.

6. WITH REGARD TO OUR OWN DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE EFFORTS IN LIBERIA, CONTINUATION OF LAC PROJECT COULD BE MOST IMPORTANT. WE NOW PLANNING MAJOR EMPHASIS ON INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT, WHICH WILL FOCUS ON IMPROVEMENT OF FOOD SUPPLY OF RURAL POPULATION, AND LIVESTOCK RAISING COULD BE MAJOR FACTOR.

7. I REALIZE THAT UNIROYAL MUST BE GUIDED BY ITS OWN ASSESSMENT OF COMPANY INTEREST. HOWEVER, I FEEL STRONGLY THAT TERMINATION OF LAC CATTLE RAISING PROJECT AT THIS TIME WILL DEAL STAGGERING BLOW TO HOPES FOR FUTURE LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN LIBERIA. IN ADDITION TO LOSS OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE GAINED BY LAC EMPLOYEES WORKING IN FMD AND CBPP CONTROL, DEPARTURE OF LAC FROM FIELD INEVITABLE WOULD DISCOURAGE OTHERS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FROM ENTERING IT.

8. ACTION REQUESTED: I URGE THAT THE DEPARTMENT COMMUNICATE MY VIEWS ON THIS MATTER TO THE APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS OF UNIROYAL IN HOPES THAT THEY MAY RECONSIDER.
MANFULL

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